

Goshen, NY – Standing in front of the Greenville Fire Department with Greenville Fire Department Chief Joe Urbanski, U.S. Representative John Hall (D-NY19) today announced that the House of Representatives has passed a tax break for volunteer firefighters, in addition to \$58,035 in federal funding that will be awarded to the Greenville Fire Department.

“It has been estimated that volunteer firefighters save the American taxpayer more than \$37.2 billion every year,” said Hall. “It is only right that our country repay them in some way. This new tax credit is estimated to provide just under a billion dollars in tax savings for volunteer firefighters over the next ten years, and in my opinion, that is money well spent.”

The State of New York has over 130,000 volunteer firefighters across the state, the highest number of any state in the country. Statewide, volunteer firefighters provide the primary means of firefighting across 80% of New York’s land area. This new tax break, contained in the Heroes Earning Assistance and Relief Tax (HEART) Act that Hall voted for and the House of Representatives passed on November 6th, will allow all firefighters, volunteer or professional, to get a personal income tax credit of \$200 off the bottom line of their taxes. The HEART Act has now moved to the Senate for further consideration.

In addition to the tax credit passed by the House, Hall also announced that the Greenville Fire Department will receive \$58,035 in federal grant money through the Department of Homeland Security’s competitive Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) program. The grant is classified as an Operations and Safety grant, and will be used to purchase 37 complete sets of extraction gear, heart defibrillators, and additional rescue gear the department would not otherwise be able to purchase.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) program was first established in 2001 and since then has continued to provide funding to fire departments and other first responders in all 50 states. To date, over \$2.4 billion in grants have helped fire departments and other first responder organizations purchase state-of-the-art personal protection equipment, response gear, and emergency vehicles, while also performing needed health and safety modifications on stations and facilities. Grants are awarded after an extended application review process, overseen by a group of fire service subject matter experts who ultimately award grants to applicants whose requests fall in line most with the priorities of the AFG program.

Congressman Hall helped the Greenville Fire Department secure the grant, sending a letter of support to the Department of Homeland Security.

“This is certainly great news for the Greenville Fire Department, and for the town of Greenville as a whole,” said Hall. “Emergency preparedness, especially at the local level, should be of the highest priority, and this grant insures that the Greenville Fire Department will have more of the resources it needs to help its firefighters keep Greenville and its surrounding area safe and respond to any potential crises in an efficient, timely, and effective manner.”